

# FLANNER HOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT #5

### DETAILED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & PROFILE



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**This supplemental report presents information about the school in three sections:**

- Flanner House Elementary School's Students (enrollment and demographic information)
- Performance at Flanner House Elementary School
- Detailed Description of Flanner House Elementary School's Programs and Activities  
(as provided by the school)

# 2005



# FLANNER HOUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## DETAILED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & PROFILE

### STUDENTS

#### Flanner House Elementary School

## A

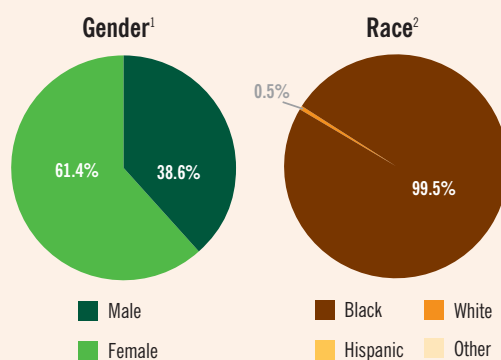
### ENROLLMENT AND DEMAND

	2004-05	At Capacity
Grades served	K-6	K-7
Maximum possible enrollment, pursuant to charter	224	344
Number of students enrolled <sup>1</sup>	202	N/A
Number of students on waiting list <sup>2</sup>	33	N/A

<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October. ■ <sup>2</sup>Source: School self-report of data, as of August 1, 2005. ■ N/A denotes "Not Applicable." A school may elect to maintain a smaller overall enrollment than that allowed by its Charter with the Mayor's Office. Actual enrollment may exceed the maximum enrollment stated in the Charter by 10%. It is possible that a school may have a waiting list but not be fully enrolled because waiting list figures are aggregated across grades; some grades may be fully enrolled and have waiting lists while others do not.

## B

### STUDENT COMPOSITION



Flanner House Elementary School	
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch <sup>2</sup>	73.8%
Special Education <sup>3</sup>	5.0%
Limited English Proficiency <sup>4</sup>	0.0%

<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October. ■ <sup>2</sup>Source: School self-report of data, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October; this information was not taken from the Indiana Department of Education website because the information provided on the website is currently erroneous for this school. ■ <sup>3</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, count reported December 2003. ■ <sup>4</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Language and Minority Programs, count reported March 2004. ■ See main report for comparative data.

### PERFORMANCE

The section below describes Flanner House Elementary School's (FHE) performance over its third school year by addressing the common performance indicators in the Mayor's Charter School Performance Framework. The complete Performance Framework may be viewed on-line at <http://www.indy.gov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Accountability/2005/home.htm>.

In some areas, this section also provides information about the school's performance in the previous two years as compared to its performance in 2004-05. For additional information on how performance has changed, view the *2003 and 2004 Accountability Reports on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools*, also available on-line at the website listed above.

The Mayor's Office conducts evaluations of school performance using a variety of measurement tools, including visits by a multi-member site evaluation team, independent surveys of parents and staff, and expert analysis of standardized test score data. Each section of the following text notes the specific tools used. Supplemental Report 12 contains a complete description of evaluation mechanisms used to prepare this report.

# IS THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM A SUCCESS?

## IS THE SCHOOL MAKING ADEQUATE YEARLY ACADEMIC PROGRESS, AS MEASURED BY THE INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY?

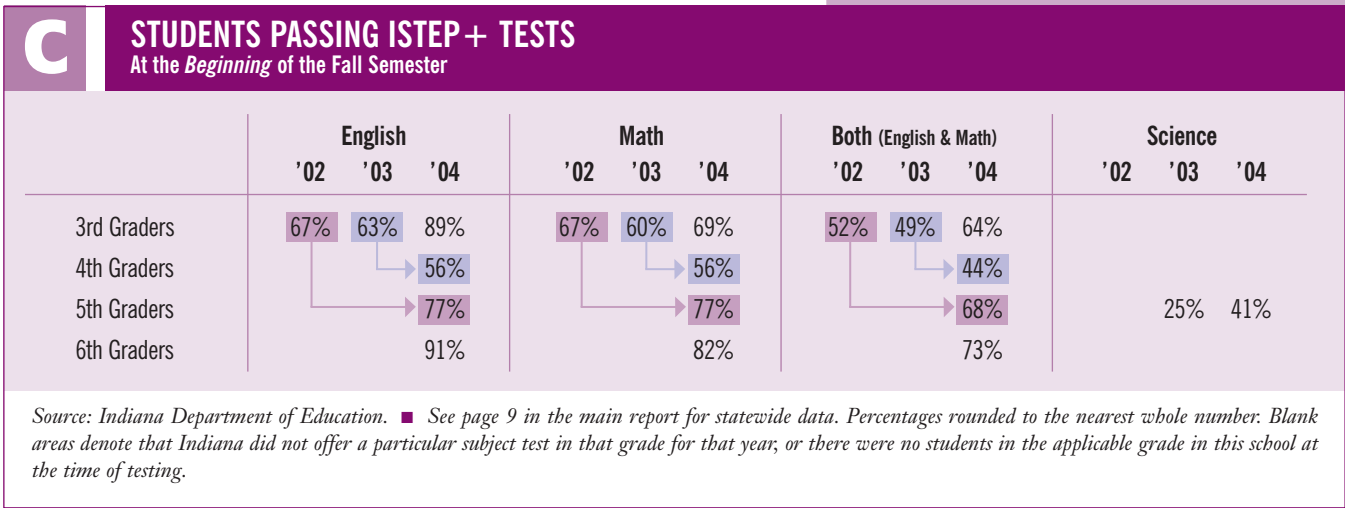
### Performance on the statewide assessment

■ **CHART C** displays the percentage of FHE 3rd through 6th graders who received passing scores on ISTEP+ examinations in fall 2004 and, where applicable, the percentage passing in 2002 and 2003. It is not possible to use these results to measure individual students' progress over time because each grade's test results pertain to different students in 2002 and 2003 versus 2004. However, simple comparisons of the percent

passing give an indication of general student performance trends at the school. The arrows in this figure compare the percent passing in a particular grade as it progressed to the next grade (e.g., how 3rd graders in 2003 performed as 4th graders in 2004 and how 3rd graders in 2002 performed as 5th graders in 2004). For example, 63% of 3rd graders passed the English ISTEP+ in 2003, while only 56% passed as 4th graders in 2004. As shown below, the fall 2004 4th grade pass rates were below the fall 2003 3rd grade

in both subjects. Conversely, 5th grade passing rates exceeded the 3rd grade rates from two years earlier in both subjects. Notably, 5th and 6th grade scores well exceeded statewide averages in both subjects in 2004. As ISTEP+ continues to be administered in all grades, the Mayor's Office will be able to determine how much progress over time individual students in this school make on these tests.

### Flanner House Elementary School



### Adequate Yearly Progress

FHE made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2005, as determined by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Federal No Child Left Behind legislation requires the IDOE to

determine AYP for each public school in Indiana, including charter schools in operation during the 2003-04 school year. The IDOE determines whether each school makes AYP based on the percentage of students who were enrolled

in the school for a full year that passed the English and mathematics ISTEP+ tests. In addition, each elementary and middle school must raise or maintain high attendance rates. ■ **CHART D** below shows FHE's AYP determinations.

## Flanner House Elementary School

**D**

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

As Determined by the Indiana Department of Education

Overall Determination: Yes	English	Math	Attendance	Participation Rate <sup>1</sup>
All students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Black, not of Hispanic origin	Yes	Yes		Yes
White, not of Hispanic origin				
Free/reduced-price lunch	Yes	Yes		Yes

Source: Indiana Department of Education. ■ AYP determinations are required by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. Blank areas denote that the Indiana Department of Education concluded that it was not possible to make a determination in the particular category for this school. The Indiana Department of Education also concluded that it was not possible to make a determination in other subgroups (e.g., Hispanic, Limited English Proficient, or Special Education) for any of the Mayor-sponsored charter schools; thus these categories are not included in this figure. Attendance Rate determination is only made for "All Students," not for subgroups. ■ <sup>1</sup>To meet AYP goals, 95% of eligible students must participate in testing.

ARE STUDENTS MAKING ADEQUATE AND SUBSTANTIAL GAINS OVER TIME?

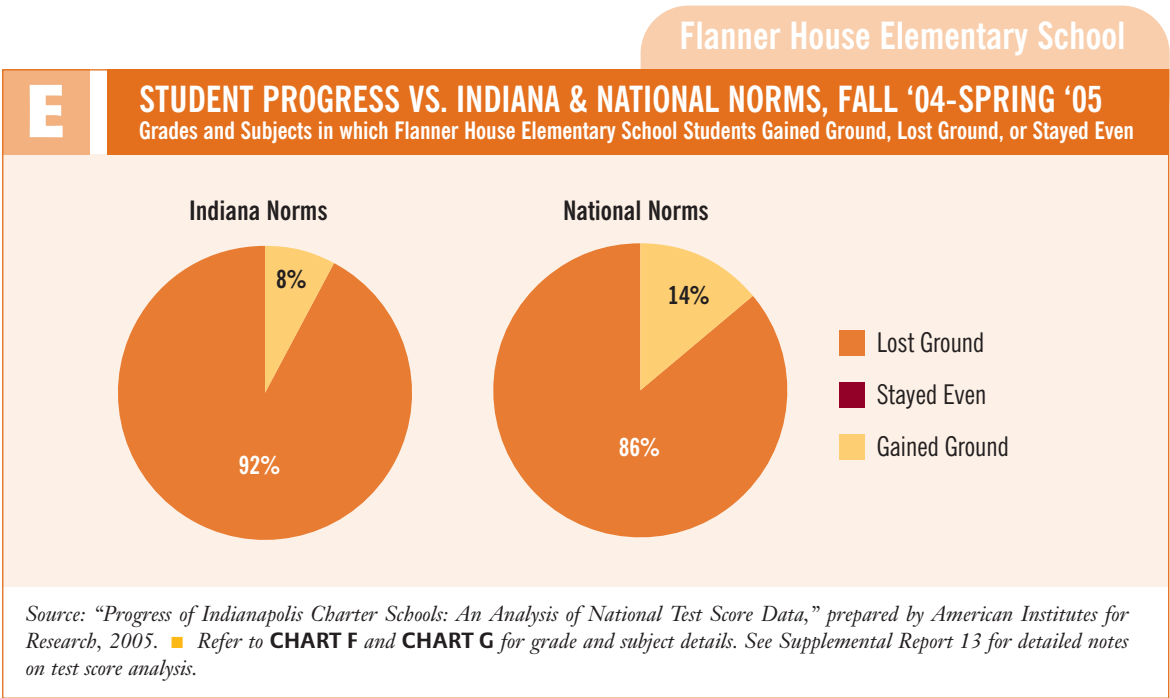
Charter schools administered the highly-regarded Northwest Evaluation Association’s (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test in reading, math, and language in both the fall and the spring. American Institutes for Research (AIR), a major nonprofit research organization, analyzed the results for the Mayor’s Office to answer two questions about how much students learned over the course of the 2004-05 academic year:

- Did students gain ground, lose ground, or stay even relative to their peers nationally and in Indiana?
- What proportion of students made sufficient progress to reach proficiency over time?

Comparative Gains: How much did Flanner House Elementary School students improve relative to their peers?

AIR was able to compare the average gains of students at FHE with those of

students across Indiana (■ CHART F) and the US (■ CHART G). The figures show where FHE students gained ground, lost ground, or stayed even relative to their peers. As the pie charts below show, FHE students gained ground relative to their Indiana peers in one out of twelve (8%) grades and subjects (■ CHART E). They gained ground relative to their national peers in two out of fourteen (14%) grades and subjects (■ CHART E).



## F

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS**

Flanner House Elementary School vs. Indiana Norms, Fall 2004 Through Spring 2005

Grade/Subject	Flanner House Elementary School Gains vs. IN Gains		Gained or Lost Ground		
	School Gains	IN Gains	Gained Ground	Stayed Even	Lost Ground
2nd Grade Math	4.0	-			
2nd Grade Reading	-2.4	-			
2nd Grade Language	-0.1	-			
3rd Grade Math	0.2	10.6			-10.4
3rd Grade Reading	-15.0	9.0			-24.0
3rd Grade Language	-3.1	8.5			-11.6
4th Grade Math	5.0	8.8			-3.8
4th Grade Reading	-9.1	6.8			-15.9
4th Grade Language	3.2	5.8			-2.6
5th Grade Math	5.2	9.0			-3.8
5th Grade Reading	-3.1	5.9			-9.0
5th Grade Language	3.1	5.2			-2.1
6th Grade Math	8.3	9.1			-0.8
6th Grade Reading	-2.1	5.3			-7.4
6th Grade Language	5.0	4.1	0.9		

**How to Read this Figure:** The fourth row, as an example, under the Grade/Subject column is 3rd grade math. The numbers in that row show that 3rd grade students at FHE made an average gain of 0.2 points, compared to 10.6 points for the average IN student. These students “lost ground” compared to the average IN student because their average gains were 10.4 points lower.

Source: “Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data,” prepared by American Institutes for Research, 2005. ■ A notation of “-” indicates that no comparison data are available for that grade and subject. Students are said to have “gained ground” or “lost ground” if their average growth differed from that of the norm group to a statistically significant degree. See Supplemental Report 13 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

## Flanner House Elementary School

G

### ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS

Flanner House Elementary School vs. National Norms (US), Fall 2004 Through Spring 2005

Grade/Subject	Flanner House Elementary School Gains vs. US Gains		Gained or Lost Ground		
	School Gains	US Gains	Gained Ground	Stayed Even	Lost Ground
2nd Grade Math	4.0	15.7			-11.7
2nd Grade Reading	-2.4	14.9			-17.3
2nd Grade Language	-0.1	-			
3rd Grade Math	0.2	11.8			-11.6
3rd Grade Reading	-15.0	10.4			-25.4
3rd Grade Language	-3.1	9.3			-12.4
4th Grade Math	5.0	8.9			-3.9
4th Grade Reading	-9.1	7.4			-16.5
4th Grade Language	3.2	6.5			-3.3
5th Grade Math	5.2	8.8			-3.6
5th Grade Reading	-3.1	6.3			-9.4
5th Grade Language	3.1	5.8			-2.7
6th Grade Math	8.3	8.1	0.2		
6th Grade Reading	-2.1	5.3			-7.4
6th Grade Language	5.0	4.5	0.5		

**How to Read this Figure:** The first row, as an example, under the Grade/Subject column is 2nd grade math. The numbers in that row show that 2nd grade students at FHE made an average gain of 4.0 points, compared to 15.7 points for the average US student. These students “lost ground” compared to the average US student because their average gains were 11.7 points lower.

Source: “Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data,” prepared by American Institutes for Research, 2005. ■ A notation of “-” indicates that no comparison data are available for that grade and subject. Students are said to have “gained ground” or “lost ground” if their average growth differed from that of the norm group to a statistically significant degree. See Supplemental Report 13 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

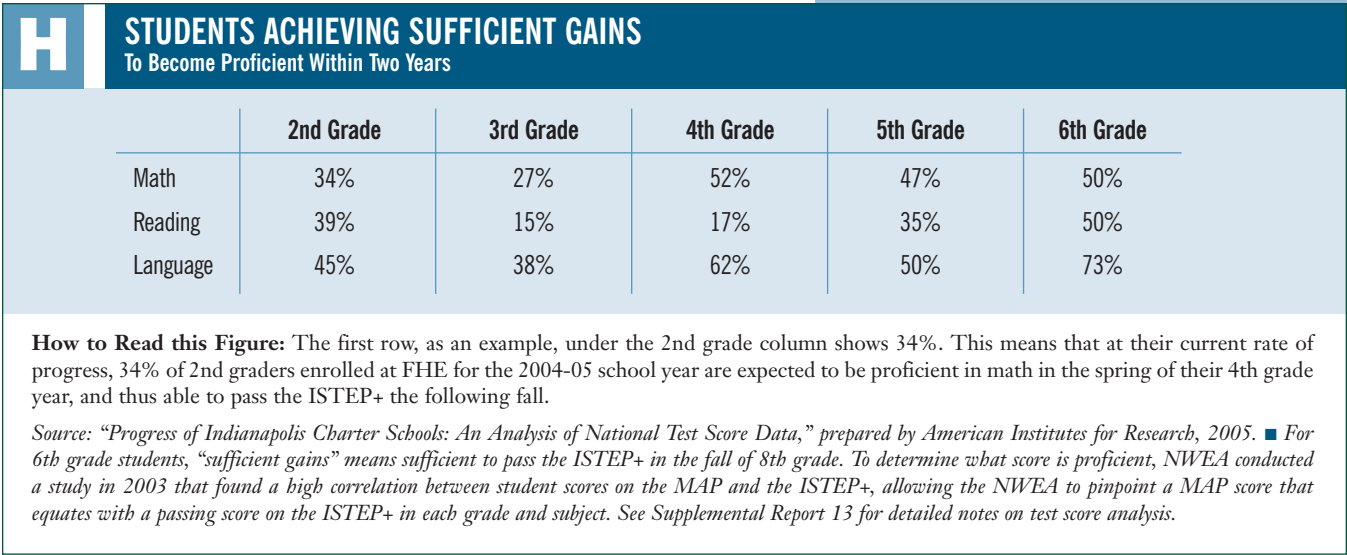
**Sufficient Gains: What proportion of students is on track to reach proficiency?**

AIR projected each FHE student’s *future* MAP test score based on the gain he or she achieved between fall 2004 and spring 2005. If the student continued to gain at the same rate, would he or she be

proficient in the subject within two years, and therefore able to pass the ISTEP+ the following fall? If so, he or she made “sufficient gains.” This year’s standard for “sufficient gains” is considerably higher than in last year’s report, in which AIR counted a student’s gains as “sufficient” if the student would become proficient by

8th grade – a relatively long time horizon for younger students. This year, the analysis projects out no more than two years for any student. AIR calculated the percentage of students who made sufficient gains in each subject and grade. ■ **CHART H** displays the results.

Flanner House Elementary School





# IS THE ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVE AND WELL-RUN?

## Is the school in sound fiscal health?

The Mayor's Office commissioned an outside accounting firm to review each school's finances. The accounting firm reported that FHE managed its financial practices satisfactorily during the past year, with the exception of proper allocation of shared costs between FHE and Flanner House Higher Learning Center for items such as personnel costs and other services. Further, the resulting obligations for shared expenses between the schools were not settled in a timely manner. Supplemental Report 11 contains financial statements and a summary of the school's finances.

The Indiana State Board of Accounts (ISBA) completed an audit of FHE's 2002-03 school year in May 2004; results were not available in time to be included in last year's Accountability Report. The ISBA found that FHE's financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the cash and investment balances and cash receipts and disbursements for the year ending June 30, 2003.

## Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?

The school continues to experience strong attendance. Its attendance rate was 97.2% in 2004-05, the same as in 2003-04 and up from 96.3% in 2002-03. Over the past three years of operation, the school has enrolled 20-35 students below the maximum allowed under the terms of its charter. During the expert site team visits, the business manager expressed concern about enrollment shortfalls; the site team recommended that the school consider strategies to raise enrollment if it is deemed necessary.

## Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?

In 2004-05, the FHE Board was scheduled to meet monthly. Governance reviews conducted by the Mayor's Office found that the Board cancelled only one meeting in 2004-05, and rescheduled one other meeting. The Board ensured that meetings are open to the public by posting notice of the meetings at the school.

Observations of the Board meetings by the Mayor's staff showed that the Board engages in discussion about issues related to the school, and staff members prepare reports that are presented to the Board. A review of the minutes did not reveal much detail on the Board meeting discussions, but did provide good information on the reports presented by staff members. The school should ensure that the minutes, including Board discussions, are accurate and coherent. In addition, Board members often ask questions related to their areas of expertise. The school may want to encourage more Board member participation in appropriate activities at the school. For example, as part of the Board's community outreach in 2004-05, the Board held breakfasts for state legislators to keep them informed of the activities at FHE, as well as to educate them about charter schools.

The expert site visit team reported that the school's seven-member Board provides ongoing expertise in financial management, educational leadership, real estate, technology, public school administration, and philanthropy. Last year's site team suggested that the Board and the school consider implementing strategic planning; in 2004-05 the school sponsored both a strategic planning retreat and a Board development retreat, along with regular meetings during the year.

Additionally, site team interviews with Board members revealed that members see their role more as ratifying policies brought to their attention, rather than generating policies for the school. The team suggested that school administration should actively consider maximizing the diverse skill sets of the Board by having them generate, as well as give guidance on, policies and other issues important to FHE.

### Flanner House Elementary School

#### ATTENDANCE RATE IN 2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR

	Attendance Rate
Flanner House Elementary School	97.2%
Indianapolis Public Schools	94.2%
All Indiana Public Schools	95.9%

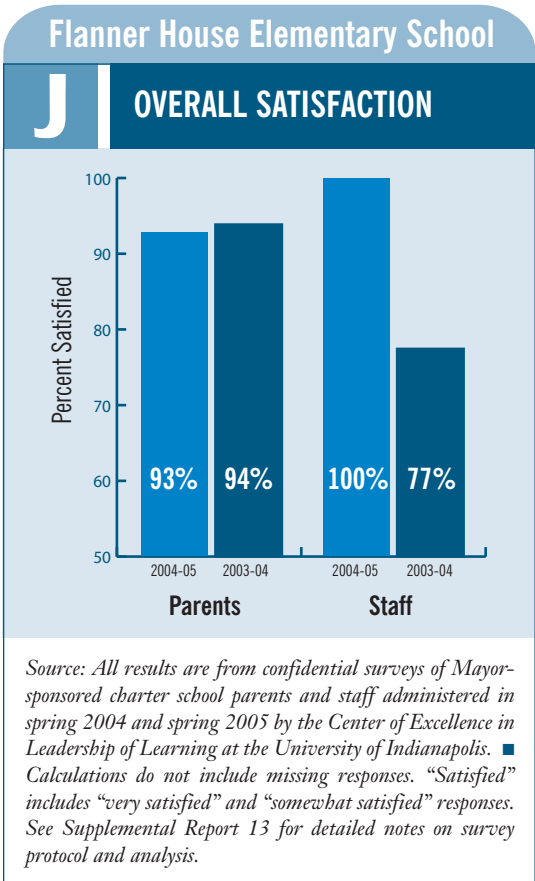
Source: Indiana Department of Education website, preliminary figures.

Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?

Parent satisfaction with FHE remained very high in 2004-05; 93% of parents surveyed reported that they were satisfied with the school, essentially unchanged from last year (■ CHART J). Staff at FHE universally (100%) reported satisfaction as well – up from 77% in the 2003-04 school year. Eighty-four percent of parents say they are likely to recommend the school to others, and 88% plan to return next year. Staff surveyed responded even more favorably, with virtually all (96%) saying they will recommend the school to others and return next year (■ CHART K).

■ CHART L shows how well parents and staff rated specific features of the school. The top-rated features for both parents and staff are highlighted in blue; the lowest-rated features are highlighted in crimson. When asked about the overall quality of education, 80% of parents and 92% of staff rated the school as “excellent” or “very good.” As shown in ■ CHART L, parents and staff generally agreed when rating specific features of FHE. A relatively high percentage of both parents and staff responded with either “excellent” or “very good” when asked about the quality of teaching and the student/teacher ratio. Both parents

and staff indicated lower satisfaction with the school facilities and food service. Parents participating in the expert site team’s focus groups also reported high levels of satisfaction, support for, and involvement in the school. According to the team, “the parents agreed that the school is ‘child-centered and family focused’ and that parents feel comfortable and are encouraged to be a part of the school.” Parents added that their association with the school “fills [them] with pride.” They also praised the school’s strong leader, dedicated teachers, and especially having black male role models on the faculty.



Flanner House Elementary School

K PARENTS AND STAFF WHO ARE LIKELY TO...

	Parents	Staff
Recommend the school to friends and colleagues	84%	96%
Return to the school next year	88%	96%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staff administered in spring 2005 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis. ■ Calculations include “extremely likely” and “very likely” responses. Calculations do not include missing responses. See Supplemental Report 13 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

## Flanner House Elementary School

L

### PARENTS AND STAFF EVALUATION

Excellent/Very Good Responses of Select Features

	Parents	Staff
Overall quality of education	80%	92%
Quality of teaching/instruction	76%	92%
Curriculum/academic program	64%	88%
Individualized student attention	63%	75%
Access to/use of computers and other technologies	44%	36%
School material and supplies	44%	56%
Classroom management	63%	60%
Student-teacher ratio/class size	74%	92%
Services provided to special needs students <sup>1</sup>	54%	68%
Support services (e.g., counseling, healthcare, inc.)	46%	57%
Opportunities for parental involvement	82%	88%
Communication about student learning/achievement	68%	87%
Communication about meeting the school's mission	61%	88%
Teacher professional development	70%	70%
Faculty/teachers	68%	84%
School administration	72%	79%
School board	70%	65%
School facilities	39%	38%
Food service	33%	42%
Transportation services	25%	62%
Enrollment/admission process	58%	78%
School size	49%	76%
School safety	63%	78%
School location	55%	68%

■ Highest Percentages of Excellent/Very Good Responses

■ Lowest Percentages of Excellent/Very Good Responses

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staff administered in spring 2005 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis. ■ Individual features with the highest percentage of excellent/very good responses are highlighted in blue; features with the lowest percentage of excellent/very good responses are highlighted in crimson. "Excellent" and "very good" responses are on a five-point scale (scale also includes "good," "fair," and "poor"). Calculations do not include missing and "don't know" responses. See Supplemental Report 13 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis. ■ <sup>1</sup>Special needs students include those for whom English is a second language or who have disabilities, academic difficulties, etc.

### **Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?**

Per the governance review, the school leader at FHE has created an excellent school culture – one where students are encouraged to participate and be the voices of the school. FHE was also commended by the expert site visit team for its leadership, noting that “all

constituents describe the school leader as a ‘strong leader’ who is ‘dedicated,’ ‘hard working,’ and ‘knows what to do to motivate teachers and students.’” As in past years, parents agreed that the school leader is the “heart of the school.” During sessions with the site visit team, the school leader provided a comprehensive profile of the typical FHE student, which was collaboratively developed with

teachers and captured the values and traits that FHE works to instill in the school culture.

Nonetheless, the expert team identified some concern among administrators, parents, staff, and the Board that there are no clear, agreed-upon goals for the school. The team recommended that the Board lead a systematic planning process to set goals, with input from teachers and parents.

## **IS THE SCHOOL MEETING ITS OPERATIONS AND ACCESS OBLIGATIONS RELATED TO:**

**organizational structure and governance obligations; physical plants that are safe and conducive to learning; fair and appropriate pupil enrollment processes; reasonable and safe transportation options available to eligible students; and legal obligations related to access and services to special needs and English as a second language students?**

FHE satisfactorily met its obligations in 2004-05 in providing access to students across Indianapolis. Neither the Mayor’s Office’s internal systems nor the expert site visit team indicated any significant concerns related to these obligations.

In 2004-05, however, the school experienced some challenges in satisfying reporting and compliance requirements. The first report of Average Daily Membership (ADM) to the IDOE was incorrect, needed amending, and was submitted one week late. The school also submitted the second report of ADM to the IDOE almost one month after its due date.

At the beginning of the school year, FHE had some difficulty providing teacher license information to the Mayor’s Office in a timely manner. However, all teacher license information was received by October 2004.

During 2004-05, the school improved its maintenance of the compliance

binder which includes all of the school’s governance, management and organizational documents and is reviewed by the Mayor’s Office on a monthly basis. By the end of the school year, the school had maintained the compliance binder satisfactorily.

The site team did not discover, nor did staff report, any issues related to meeting operations and access obligations. FHE appeared to have “an adequate instructional staff with appropriate qualifications.” Although the physical plant is an older facility, the team reported that classrooms are adequately sized and the premises are sufficiently maintained. School leaders indicated to the team that they have implemented a fair pupil enrollment process.

As part of the school’s central philosophy of parental involvement, families are strongly encouraged to personally pick up and drop off their students daily. During

the site visit focus group, parents expressed support for the school’s philosophy for parents to transport their students to and from school.

The team noted that in 2004-05, FHE identified a full-time resource teacher who is licensed to work with special education students. According to the site visit team, “this staff member will support and monitor the implementation of special education individualized education plans (IEP) and work with both individual students and teachers. Classroom teachers report that they work well with the resource teacher and they have what they need to work effectively with their special education students.” As FHE grows to a size where it serves a larger number of students with special educational needs, the team suggested that FHE continue its efforts to improve the services provided to these students.

# IS THE SCHOOL PROVIDING THE APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS?

## Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?

Overall, the site team found that all stakeholders understand and support the mission of FHE. When surveyed, 61% of parents and 88% of staff gave "excellent" or "very good" ratings to the school's communication about meeting the school's mission (■ CHART L).

## Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?

The expert site visit team observed that FHE classrooms appeared to have adequate resources and supplies, as evidenced in learning centers, books and reading materials, classroom displays, and supporting materials for learning activities. Additionally, during the 2004-05 school year, each teacher was provided with a \$200 budget for classroom materials.

The team commended the school for "providing a range of exemplary programs after school to support the development of the 'ideal student,' primarily through community partnerships such as Boy Scouts, chess, bells, drum core, dance... Toastmasters, poetry, [and] public speaking."

The site visit team noted several areas for attention related to curriculum for FHE: "The FHE charter identifies five key curriculum areas (language arts, science and technology, history, mathematics, and arts) and important outcomes by grade level. At the site visit presentation, students described many relevant activities related to language arts, science, mathematics and art... but provided no information regarding history (except for Black History month activities) or the use of technology." The team recommended that the school consider which curriculum areas are strong and which areas need development, and subsequently identify learning goals and activities to strengthen curriculum areas that need attention. Additionally, the team recommended that staff outline expectations and goals for students related to technology and specify steps for attaining those goals.

In addition, FHE's charter identifies specific curriculum packages, instructional strategies and intended learning outcomes in various content areas for each grade. The team did not find direct evidence that the school considered the effectiveness of each subject's curriculum and/or teaching strategies with specific groups of students (e.g., those above or below grade level or requiring special education). The site team suggested that "additional teacher reflection should include a review of the curriculum packages and instructional strategies in order to identify areas that are (not) working and outcomes that are (not) being achieved and a plan for implementing needed improvements."

## Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?

FHE teachers indicated in site team interviews that they use the Indiana State Academic Standards when designing their lessons. They also reported that they develop their own assignments, drawing upon NWEA, Terra Nova and ISTEP+ scores as well as Open Court for reading. In 2004-2005, the school augmented skills in this area by sending selected staff to an NWEA training session on using data to design instruction.

Site team findings reinforced the need for "instructional staff to understand and use data to impact learning. The school should continue to provide appropriate professional development and provide time and a format for teachers to examine and use data to improve instruction and learning." Moreover, "instructional staff should undertake a critical examination of available student performance and progress data in order to identify areas of strength and areas that need attention, set specific benchmarks and goals, and develop appropriate action plans. For example, the school should consider what strategies were successful in promoting the increase in the percent of students who passed the fifth grade ISTEP+ pilot science test between 2003-04 and 2004-05 and what specific steps will be taken to

ensure that the remaining students master science standards."

The team did not find clear evidence that FHE teachers explicitly align their lessons to Indiana State Academic Standards. The site team suggested that the school conduct a thorough curriculum audit to ensure that all standards are being taught and learned within and across grade levels. The team recommended that teachers consider raising student awareness of the specific standards and critical vocabulary that are being taught, through techniques such as writing this information on the board or including it in instructions and/or assignments.

## Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?

Site visit interviews revealed high levels of satisfaction with both the culture and the climate at FHE. During focus groups with teachers, many strengths were cited to the team, including "the overall 'family-like atmosphere' and culture of respect, small classes, staff diversity (including four males), strong parent support, good communication and cooperation among all constituents, strong support and leadership from school leader, cooperative grade-level teams, new resource teacher for special education, appreciation of teachers by parents and administration, after-school programs, quarterly projects, and commitment to students." Teachers also reported participation by selected teachers during 2004-05 in a variety of professional development activities, including workshops on differentiated instruction and in-school training in Open Court reading.

Parents identified for the site team a number of ways in which they are actively involved in the life of the school, including: "supporting academics (e.g., in classrooms, on quarterly projects and on class trips), voting on the parent representative on the Board, parent meetings, and specific activities as requested." Opportunities for parental involvement were viewed as one of the strong aspects of FHE; 82% of the



parents provided “excellent” or “very good” responses. By contrast, other features potentially impacting the school’s climate – such as school facilities and food service – were rated relatively low by both parents and staff (■ **CHART L**).

### **Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school’s mission?**

Conversations with teachers, coupled with classroom observations by the site visit team, revealed that, overall, FHE teachers focus activities on the development of basic skills by students (e.g., reading, writing, speaking and teamwork). The site team also commended FHE for using “a variety of teaching processes to ensure learning for all students including providing engaging activities, large amounts of time for students to practice and receive feedback on basic skills, daily writing, one-on-one work, use of manipulative materials, quarterly projects, science projects, civic and community engagement activities, class trips, and a variety of experiences in art, music, and physical education.”

The team recommended that instructional staff identify those students who are not performing at expected levels and develop ways to improve learning for these students. The site team considered

those students who did not yet meet ISTEP+ standards as an appropriate initial target group for this undertaking. Another area where the site team recommended improvements included the need for school-wide frameworks and rubrics for core skills such as critical thinking and writing.

### **Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?**

While 87% of staff rated the school’s communication about student learning and achievement as either “excellent” or “very good,” only 68% of parents responded similarly (■ **CHART L**). Communication about meeting the school’s mission, as reported earlier, was rated similarly by both staff (88%) and parents (61%).

The expert visit site team found all interviewees reported that parents are both informed and involved; they are up to date on their child’s behavior and on their child’s learning. According to the team, parents receive information through daily contact with teachers and staff members when they drop off or pick up their child, via notes and telephone calls from teachers, through a weekly newsletter from teachers and the school leader, via school functions, and in parent conferences.

### **Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?**

In 2004-2005, FHE added several instructional positions. The site team reported that “the school continues to hire ‘high quality teachers’ who ‘fit’ with the FHE culture.” As the school expands to serve grades seven and eight, the expert site visit team identified a potential need to add an assistant to the school leader – particularly if the current school leader retains her responsibility for the early childhood program.

To foster more systematic professional development, the site team pointed out the need for a more explicit process to identify and provide for teachers’ needs in this area. In the survey on Mayor-sponsored charter schools, 70% of the staff surveyed rated professional development at FHE as either “excellent” or “very good.”

Parents interviewed by the site team articulated the need for an art teacher and arts education program.

# DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

*Source: The information below was provided by the school to the Mayor's Office. It is included here to offer the public a more detailed picture of the school's programs and activities.*

## Mission, philosophy, and educational program

FHE's mission is to develop the highest potential of its students through educating the "whole person" and ensuring that all students, at a minimum,

### DRUM LESSONS

Two classes of approximately twenty-five students each take drum lessons with a member of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra twice a week after school. The instructor, who the students affectionately refer to as "Grampa," also teaches them about self-control, personal responsibility, and teamwork. The student drummers performed in 2004-05 at the Children's Museum as well as at the Hilbert Circle Theater prior to the Symphony's Black History Month Concert. To further encourage the students' interest in music, the Symphony provided free tickets for students and parents to attend a performance by the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Percussion Band.

attain basic skill proficiency appropriate to their age and grade level. By fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills, FHE seeks to build a solid foundation and provide positive motivation for life-long learning among its students.

The school bases its educational approach on the belief that children acquire genuine self-esteem through academic accomplishments. FHE offers small classes, dedicated teachers, and individualized attention to each student. The students and families also benefit from the extensive family support services available on-site through the school's parent organization, Flanner House of Indianapolis. Through the multi-service center at Flanner House, families can access wrap-around social services and

obtain emergency food, transportation, shelter, and child support payments.

The atmosphere at FHE encourages academic achievement and recognizes the importance of hard work and personal responsibility. The school features a disciplined environment where students are taught to respect their peers, parents, teachers, and themselves. The school uses the nationally recognized and research-based Open Court Reading and Everyday Mathematics curricula. Starting as early as Kindergarten, students undertake research projects that culminate in visual, written, and oral presentations.

Parents play a key role at FHE through their active participation and support and agree to work collaboratively with school personnel toward their child's success. Parent volunteers are in the school daily, tutoring students one-on-one, reading along with students, and organizing field trips and other activities. The school does not send quarterly grades home; instead, parents are invited to come to school for conferences where teachers personally deliver report cards and discuss student progress. More than 90% of parents attended all conferences in 2004-05; teachers followed up by telephone with every parent who missed a conference.

## Academic programs and initiatives

- **School Pride.** PRIDE stands for Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence. Tickets are awarded to students when they are "caught" doing or saying something that reflects PRIDE. During general assembly every Friday, all tickets for the week are placed in a container and a drawing is held for prizes such as books, educational games, school supplies, and tickets to community events. Students also showed their school pride by making a quilt with a patriotic theme and the name of every student, staff member, and administrator of FHE written on it. To

show respect for others, students stand when a guest enters the classroom; one child in each class is appointed to greet the guest and explain what the class is currently doing.

- **Research Projects.** Students in all grades – including Kindergarten – are required to complete four research projects per year, designed to develop students' abilities to perform research, prepare written reports, and speak publicly. To teach their peers about the topic, students produce colorful posters or other visual aids, outline their presentations, dress appropriately as presenters, and present their findings to their class. For example, 4th grade students were assigned a project called "What Happened in History on the Day that I was Born." As part of the project, students were asked to identify noteworthy individuals sharing their birth dates, including authors of American literature, historical figures, and recording artists. Students also researched trends in society at the time of their birth, such as the top television shows, a popular movie in the theaters, the cost of a postage stamp, and the cost of a hamburger at McDonald's.
- **College-Bound Culture.** Part of FHE's culture is to encourage children to have high expectations for their future. All classes at the school are designated by the year that students will graduate from college. For example, 1st grade students in the 2004-05 school year are referred to as the "Class of 2020." Further promoting the college-bound culture, a 2nd grade class hosted a guest speaker from the University of Indianapolis who talked with the children about the importance of attending college and what college life is like.
- **Frequent Student Assessment.** Teachers received training on how to utilize student assessment data to plan

classroom lessons. To ensure that teachers have reliable information about student achievement, FHE uses multiple measures to assess student learning. The language arts curriculum, Open Court Reading, includes assessment tools that teachers use regularly to gauge student progress. The school also administers the Terra Nova exams in multiple subjects yearly. These assessments are in addition to the NWEA's MAP, which all Mayor-sponsored charter schools administer twice per year.

### Parent involvement

- **Extensive Parent Involvement.** Parental involvement is the cornerstone of FHE, with families playing an integral part in their children's education. Parents are asked to sign a covenant at the time of enrollment committing to at least twenty hours of volunteer time per semester. Again in 2004-05, over 90% of parents fulfilled this commitment, and many volunteered even more hours than they were asked.
- **Parent Liaison.** The school employs a part-time parent liaison. The liaison works with parents to encourage their involvement in the school, and helps parent volunteers plan and coordinate school meetings, events, and fundraising activities.
- **Parent-Family-Teacher Committee.** The school's CONNECT Parent-Family-Teacher committee has about 100 active members, who support the school in all of its programs and fundraising. The officers of CONNECT meet monthly. The group sponsored a Pizza Club in 2004-05 that included a fundraising competition between students; the 6th grade student who sold the most pizzas won a limousine ride and free pizza for her class. Funds raised by CONNECT were used to purchase an overhead projector for the school and televisions and CD players for the classrooms. CONNECT also organized school-wide events during Teacher Appreciation Week, including buffet lunches every day and gifts for each teacher.

- **Frequent Parent/Teacher Contact.** Parents and teachers at FHE are in contact on a regular basis – in many cases, daily. The school offers bus transportation, but no families elected to use the transportation. The students' families prefer to bring their children to school and pick them up after school. Many parents use this opportunity to come into the classroom and talk with their children's teachers.

### Supplemental programs and activities

- **Enrichment Programs.** The school offers numerous enrichment activities during the year and over the summer in the arts, music, health, and leadership education. A partnership with Youth In Arts funds visiting artists who lead activities such as creative arts, acting, and drumming at the school. Students learn about decision-making and good choices during Indianapolis Police Department presentations. Multi-service center health education staff provides age-appropriate classes on tobacco and the risks associated with second-hand smoke, through a grant from the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Agency.
- **Before- and After-School Programs.** The school offers before- and after-school educational activities, including: reading and writing exercises, tutoring in language arts and math, reading in the library, games, physical education, and nutrition. Three days a week, a fine arts college major teaches dance and fitness exercises after school. Some 5th and 6th grade students in the after-school program completed the Toastmasters program, earning certificates after completing ten public speaking projects.
- **Honors Choir.** Several FHE students were selected to join the Indianapolis Charter School Honor Choir, conducted by the Indianapolis Children's Choir. The students practice twice weekly after school with students from four other Indianapolis

charter schools. The choir performed numerous times during the school year at locations such as Nordstrom's, Riley Hospital for Children, and the Indiana Charter School Conference.

- **Community Service Projects.** The 6th grade students played "Santa's helpers" by hosting a Christmas party for community children and youth. On the United Way's Youth Day of Caring, a national one-day volunteer event for youth in April, approximately thirty students volunteered by helping landscape the campus to prepare for spring.

### MALE TEACHERS

Only 9% of elementary school teachers nationwide are male, according to a 2001 survey published by the National Education Association.

Far exceeding this national average, four of the eleven teachers at FHE are male (36%), reflecting the school's desire to provide positive male role models for students, particularly those who lack male role models in their home lives.

### Community partnerships and donations

- **Long-time Partnerships with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS).** A satellite IPS Kindergarten program has been located at Flanner House for more than twenty-five years. Through another long-standing partnership with IPS, a GED program meets two nights per week at the school. A grandmother of two FHE students has been participating in the GED program for several years.
- **On-Site Branch of Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library.** FHE students and parents frequently use the Flanner House branch of the public library, located on-site since 1978. In 2004-05 the library provided an opportunity for 6th grade students to present their own poetry. Teachers take advantage of the easy access to the library to research and enrich their



lessons and special projects. Teachers also select and reserve books for student use on the subjects that they are studying in class.

- **Resources for Families.** FHE helps its families find the resources they need for success; many of those resources are available on-site through the Flanner House Multi-Service Center. For example, a student recently received bereavement counseling from a social worker after the sudden loss of a family member. Following a seminar on home ownership organized for FHE parents by Fifth Third Bank and the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Program, two families successfully purchased their own homes.
- **Student Volunteers from Marian College and Butler University.** Students in a semester-long class on Urban Learning at Marian College volunteer at FHE two to three times per week, providing classroom assistance based on teachers' needs. Six students from an elementary special education class at Butler University tutor students two to three times per week in math and language arts.
- **Focus on Charity and Service.** Giving back to the community is an important component of every child's education at the school. During the United Way Campaign, the entire school held a fundraising competition between classrooms. The winner, a 3rd grade class, collected a total of \$128.33 of the \$600 raised (mostly in nickels, dimes and pennies) and won a pizza party. Students also designed and decorated two stools that were sold at the "Miracle on 24th Street CHAIRity Auction" to raise funds for the Flanner House Multi-Service Center. To further encourage the students to participate in service activities, a prominent Indianapolis attorney who volunteers with the American Red Cross spoke to the 5th grade students about volunteerism.

## Staffing

- **Experience and Continuity.** The school leader, Director of Education Frances Booker-Malone, has worked with students at Flanner House for thirty years. She founded the Flanner House Academy, the private school forerunner to FHE, and has overseen other educational programs at Flanner House. Reflecting the close-knit learning community the Director has created, some of the students have parents and grandparents who themselves attended programs under Mrs. Malone's guidance.
- **Sharing Best Practices with Other Schools.** The Director of Education and teachers participate in the Network of Schools, a collaborative professional development initiative managed by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis. Meeting with peers from other charter, IPS, and Catholic schools, teachers share best practices and attend workshops on literacy strategies, the use of assessment data to plan lessons, and differentiated instruction in the classroom. Through the Network of Schools, an outside expert in differentiated instructional practices provided three in-service trainings for FHE staff.
- **On-going Staff Evaluation and Professional Development.** The Director of Education meets individually with each teacher once or twice each month and is in each of the classrooms regularly. This frequent contact ensures open communication between the Director and all teachers. A formal classroom observation is conducted annually for each teacher. Additionally, in 2004-05 four teachers attended workshops in math and reading at Butler University, and four attended a full day of training on student assessment.
- **Frequent Staff Collaboration.** The teaching staff meets as a group once a week to share best practices,

alternating between team teaching meetings and a full teaching staff meeting with the Director of Education.

## School management

The School Director, Cynthia A. Diamond, provides leadership to all personnel in carrying out the school's overall goals and objectives. Mrs. Diamond ensures that the school accomplishes its goals, assesses the degree to which policies and practices are implemented, and develops plans to address the school's needs. The Director of Education, Frances Booker-Malone, oversees learning and teaching at the school. Mrs. Malone evaluates the results of student testing and other measures of continuous school improvement. She supports and encourages staff to seek and utilize innovative instructional methods, administers disciplinary measures, and supervises and evaluates all instructional personnel. The Business Manager/Start-up Coordinator, DeNeen Owens-Collins, is responsible for monitoring the school's budget and expenditures. Mrs. Collins also compiles all financial information for reports, writes grants, and maintains school records. The Director of Public Relations and Communications, Libby Scott, is responsible for community outreach, recruitment planning, informational and promotional materials, and media relations.

## School governance

FHE's eight-member Board of Directors meets monthly. The Board is responsible for ensuring that staff members implement the mission and vision of the school. Board responsibilities also include setting overall school policy, hiring and evaluating the performance of the School Director, and monitoring finances. In 2004-05 the Board attended a series of sessions to plan the future direction and growth of the school, led by a specialist in charter school board strategic planning. Board members also perform additional committee work and attend special events

at the school. Current Board members include parents, educators, community leaders, and local business leaders. Their collective experience includes, but is not limited to technology, education, business, law, and finance.

### **Facilities**

FHE is located in the near northwest area of Indianapolis on the campus of the Flanner House of Indianapolis. The main school building houses Kindergarten

through 2nd grade, as well as the school's office and a branch of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. Four spacious modular units adjacent to the primary school building house grades three through six. Flanner House is implementing a capital improvement plan for the entire campus, with long-term plans to house the elementary school in a single permanent building.

### **Planned improvements for the upcoming school year**

- **Health Clinic.** The school will have a full-time nurse on-site for two years starting fall 2005, supplied by Learning Well through a grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation. Learning Well, a nonprofit organization that operates school-based health clinics, will set up a health clinic with modern equipment and technology at no cost to the school or its students.